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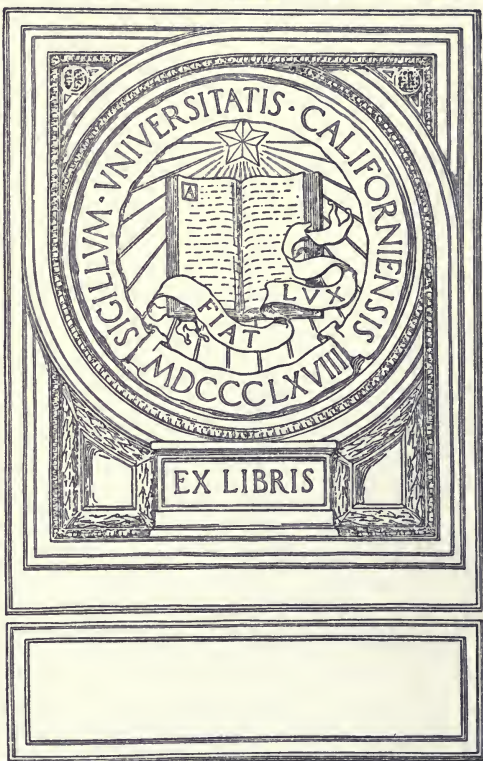
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I'm Going! : a Comedy
in One Act: by Tristan
Bernard : Translated by
Barrett H. Clark

Samuel French : Publisher
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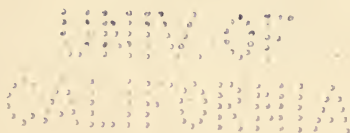
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THE WORLD'S BEST PLAYS
BY CELEBRATED EUROPEAN AUTHORS

BARRETT H. CLARK

GENERAL EDITOR

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TO THE
AUTHOR

Gift of Mrs. De Lauret A. Roden

TRISTAN BERNARD

Tristan Bernard stands in much the same relation to contemporary French drama as George Cohan does to that of the United States: in his comedies the most amusing types of the society of the day are set forth with a good-humor and freshness which gives them a distinct flavor of their own. Many of his numerous plays are broad farces, but there is a philosophical strain running throughout, which raises them out of the realm of the purely theatrical. In "On naët esclave" and "Le Petit Café", for instance, we find a serious comment on life; this however, never interferes with the joyous course of the comedy, but forms rather a more solid background.

"Je Vais m'en aller", which is here translated into English for the first time, is a very simple little dialog, illustrative of the early work of this dramatist. There are no difficulties in the way of staging or acting.

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THE
THEATRE
OF
THE
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I'M GOING!

PERSONS IN THE PLAY

HENRI

JEANNE.....*His wife*

SCENE: *A room in the apartment of HENRI and
JEANNE, in Paris.*

TIME: *The present*

I'M GOING!

SCENE: *A small, well-furnished room. As the curtain rises, enter JEANNE, left, followed by HENRI. She sits on a sofa which is down-stage to the left. HENRI goes to the window at the back, then comes down-stage, sitting on a chair to the right, near a small table, where there is a coffee service.*

HENRI. 'Weather is always the same: every Sunday it's superb until noon, then it's cloudy and a little rainy—or else there's a big thunderstorm. It's always that way when I want to go to the races!

JEANNE. Are you going this afternoon?

HENRI. (*A little nervous*) Of course, didn't you know? I told you this morning.

JEANNE. You want to lose more money!

HENRI. You know I never bet.

JEANNE. Then you're going to leave me all alone? Take me with you!

HENRI. No, no; that's not the idea. When I go alone, I take a cab and pay five francs for it; that's my total. I know the doorkeeper and I can always find some friend to drive me around. Now, if you go with me, I must get a special carriage, and that costs twenty francs.

JEANNE. We paid only fifteen last week.

HENRI. Because the weather was bad. Besides, I have to buy a lady's ticket for you—ten francs! Personally, I can't see the use in spending thirty francs—well, say twenty-five—for something that gives you no pleasure. You've told me a hun-

dred times you don't like horse-racing. And when I go with you, I don't have a good time.

JEANNE. You *are* polite!

HENRI. No, I have a good time only when I go alone. When you are with me, I can't run about, I can't look at the stables, or the judges' stands, or anything. When I'm alone, I do as I please. If you go I must put on my best clothes—these are old moth-eaten ones—and I can never enjoy myself in new clothes. If you insist on going out with me, let's go for a walk or a drive, but not to the races.

JEANNE. Yes, up the Champs-Élysées together! And you looking daggers at me all the time! Whenever I *do* go with you, you're always making disagreeable remarks.

HENRI. Because you are in a bad humor: you'll never give me your arm.

JEANNE. It looks too foolish for words.

HENRI. If you'd only walk like a human being! But you seem to take particular pleasure in walking as fast as your feet will carry you. For instance, I'm walking at your right, and you want to pass someone in front of us; well, you walk directly in front of me and don't leave an inch of room. Then I must run fast in order to catch up to you. Now, it isn't right that I should have to run to keep up to you, especially as I should be at your side and not have it look as if you were unaccompanied. Think of the remarks people make to you!

JEANNE. But you allow me to go out unaccompanied!

HENRI. I do, but——

JEANNE. Yes, because you don't care what people say to me when you aren't there and have to demand an apology!

HENRI. Anyway, I don't care to go out with you. And since you don't like it either——

JEANNE. Oh, of course, I don't beam with pleasure, but I should enjoy it if you only behaved decently, and weren't always making disagreeable remarks. I'd as soon go out with you as with anyone else.

HENRI. (*After a pause*) What time is it?

JEANNE. No time: the little clock over there hasn't been running for a week.

HENRI. I'll find out in the kitchen.

JEANNE. You know very well that the cook never has the right time; she's always half an hour fast or half an hour slow, depending on whether dinner is ready or not.

HENRI. I'm going now, and I shan't need a carriage. I'll take the train at the Saint-Lazare Station. (*He is about to kiss JEANNE*)

JEANNE. Then you're really going to leave me alone? Very well!

HENRI. (*Seating himself by JEANNE*) Come now, dear, what difference does it make to you if I'm going out for a little innocent amusement? Why, if I stayed you would only be bored to death!

JEANNE. Nice, isn't it, for me to stay quietly at home while Monsieur goes out to amuse himself!

HENRI. But this is no kind of weather for a walk or a drive!

JEANNE. Is it any better for the races?

HENRI. Of course it is. They race in all kinds of weather. I can't deny that it isn't so amusing when it rains—why, to-day, for instance, I know I'm not going to be wildly amused.

JEANNE. Then why don't you take me?

HENRI. I've told you already—and it's going to rain and you'd spoil your dress.

JEANNE. I'll put on an old one.

HENRI. But you won't have a good time. (*He rises impatiently*) No, I think it's absurd to throw away thirty francs a day like this. You would

blame me for my extravagance for a week to come.

JEANNE. I know it seems absurd to spend thirty francs to go to the races; I'd rather go to the theater and have supper after.

HENRI. You're quite right. You are a very reasonable little woman—very practical. Now I'm going! (*He goes to her*) Do you want me to go?

JEANNE. Do just as you please.

HENRI. Tell me you want me to go.

JEANNE. You are perfectly free.

HENRI. I won't go if you are going to sulk.

JEANNE. You really can't expect me to leap for joy when you leave me all alone and go off for the day on a pleasure trip?

HENRI. Aren't you going out?

JEANNE. Where should I go?

HENRI. For a little walk—you need the air. (*He once more tries to say good-bye*) Well, then—There you are, sulking! (*Irritated*) You're a stubborn little minx!

JEANNE. Why?

HENRI. You sulk just to spoil my pleasure. It's absurd of me to allow myself to be affected. You know I enjoy the races—well, I'm going! (*He takes his opera-glasses and hat*) How selfish women are! (*Returning to his wife*) Good-bye. Kiss me, won't you?

JEANNE. No!

HENRI. Why not? (*Sulkily*) Now she won't kiss me!

JEANNE. Why should I kiss a man who calls me a stubborn little minx?

HENRI. Oh, very well, then! (*Laying down his opera-glasses and hat*) I see you want to keep me from going to the races? I hope you are satisfied? I'm not going! And I had a twenty-franc ticket. I'll tear it up! (*He takes the ticket from his pocket*)

I'll tear it! Are you going to let me? It's worth twenty francs?

JEANNE. It is if you use it. But you can't sell it, so it isn't worth a sou.

HENRI. (*Putting the ticket into his pocket*) Now, dearest, let me make a proposal. (*He sits down by her*) You know I love you—I'll stay another fifteen minutes, and I shan't take the train at Saint-Lazare; I'll take a cab at the door.

JEANNE. If you're going you'd better go at once and save the cab-fare.

HENRI. You think I'd better? I'm going! Good-bye! Kiss me. (*He rises and kisses her*)

JEANNE. There!

HENRI. Now!

JEANNE. Oh, you make me—! (*She rises and goes into her room, left. HENRI takes up his opera-glasses and hat again and starts to go, then hesitates and sits down. Re-enter JEANNE a moment later*) What, haven't you gone yet? (*HENRI makes no answer*) There is nothing to prevent your going. I'm going out myself.

HENRI. Where?

JEANNE. To send a telegram to Juliette. She is home all day, and she said I might come to see her.

HENRI. Good! I see! (*He rises*) I'm going! Good-bye!

JEANNE. Good-bye, dearest. (*HENRI is at the door*) Have a good time.

HENRI. (*Stopping and looking at her intently*) What?

JEANNE. I say, have a good time!

HENRI. Are you glad I'm going?

JEANNE. Very, because you like the races.

HENRI. Then I think I'll stay. (*He lays his opera-glasses and hat on the little table and sits down. He seems preoccupied*) It's not natura!

for you to be so pleased. Will you kindly show me the telegram you are sending to Juliette?

JEANNE. Why so mysterious? Here it is. (*She shows him the telegram*)

HENRI. You let me have it very quickly! You're not usually so obedient when I ask for something. You must have some reason!

JEANNE. My dear, you are stark, staring mad!

HENRI. Yes—you think me blind, don't you? This telegram to Juliette—! It's a signal, that's what it is! It's your revenge! Ha!

JEANNE. How absurd you are! I shan't answer.

HENRI. Wiser for you, eh?—Oh, dear, and I'll miss the first race! Well, I prefer not to go under the circumstances. My pleasure is spoiled! I'm going to stay with you!

JEANNE. This is too absurd!

HENRI. Yes, I know. I'll be in your way. Of course, you and Juliette had it all arranged—I know you were going to meet someone! But I tell you I'm not a man to be trifled with! (*Angrily*) I'll have a talk with *him*!

JEANNE. I haven't the honor of knowing Him!

HENRI. Meantime I shall wait here—(*He strikes the table with his fist*) in peace and quiet!

JEANNE. (*Exasperated, as she thrusts his hat on his head*) Listen to me: go to the races. You've got on my nerves, and I don't intend to spend the whole afternoon with such a disagreeable creature!

HENRI. I am here and I am going to stay here. You can't move me!

JEANNE. What are you afraid of?

HENRI. (*Darkly*) I don't want you to go to Juliette's—or anywhere else.

JEANNE. You may take me to Juliette's if you like.

HENRI. Do you want me to? (*He rises*) Very

well, put on your hat. (*She starts to go to her room but he takes her by the hand*) Really? Look me in the eye. *Do you want me to take you to Juliette's?*

JEANNE. Yes, I do. Well?

HENRI. Then I'm going to the races. I see—you mean it. Good-bye, dear. (*He kisses her*) Now, do you know what would give me a great deal of pleasure? I'd like you to stay here and not go to Juliette's.

JEANNE. Oh, indeed! You're not satisfied to leave me all alone, but you even insist on my not going out! (*Sobbing*) All right, then, I won't go out! I'll stay here!

HENRI. (*Moved*) There, there, dear! Don't cry! I'll stay with you, my dear little girl!

JEANNE. (*Tearfully*) I see you *do* love me—in your own way!

HENRI. (*Taking her in his arms*) Of course I do! See, I'm willing to sacrifice my whole afternoon for you. I do it willingly, joyfully. (*A pause*) Joyfully. (*Another pause. He kisses her on the forehead*) Now, if I were in your place, I know what I should say to my dear little husband. (*He embraces her*) I should say: "My dear, you have proved to me that you love me, and I won't accept your sacrifice!" (*JEANNE breaks away from him*) Jeanne, we aren't children, we can see and think clearly like rational human beings. Let us not ruin our happiness by making useless sacrifices.

JEANNE. That's a nice theory, but you only act on it when *you* want to use it for your own pleasure. You know how I adore dancing, and you never take me, because you say you detest it.

HENRI. That isn't the same thing, dearest! I have to take you to dances, while you aren't forced to accompany me to the races.

JEANNE. That's what I want you to do! Take me!

HENRI. It's raining.

JEANNE. It's not raining.

HENRI. It will be soon.—What time is it?

JEANNE. (*With a sigh*) Time for you to go!

HENRI. (*Effusively*) Thank you! Then you don't care if I do go?

JEANNE. Not in the least.

HENRI. And you aren't going out yourself? Are you going to stay here all alone?

JEANNE. Yes, all alone.

HENRI. Dear girl! (*He rises*) Now for the races! (*He takes the opera-glasses and hat and goes to the door at the right, looking at JEANNE with an air of tenderness*) Good-bye, dearest! (*He goes out*)

JEANNE. (*Waits for a moment, listens, hears the outer door close, then rises and goes to the door at the back. She speaks to someone off-stage*) Marie, don't go before you get me a large cup of chocolate. Bring two rolls, too. Oh, and go at once to my room and bring me my box of ribbons and those old hats. (*She comes down-stage, and says, beaming*) What fun I'll have trimming hats!

Curtain

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